DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 414 102 RC 021 182

AUTHOR Rochin, Refugio I.
TITLE The Features and Roles of Rural Latinos: Cross-National Perspectives. JSRI Occasional Paper No. 26. Latino Studies Series.
INSTITUTION Michigan State Univ., East Lansing. Julian Samora Research Inst.
PUB DATE 1997-07-00
NOTE 19p.; Presented at the Annual Conferences of the American Agricultural Economics Association (Toronto, Ontario, Canada, July, 1997) and the Rural Sociological Society (Toronto, Ontario, Canada, August, 1997). Photographs will not reproduce adequately.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Change; Economic Change; Elementary Secondary Education; *Employment Patterns; Ethnic Discrimination; *Ethnic Distribution; *Farm Labor; Farmers; *Hispanic Americans; Immigrants; Income; Meat Packing Industry; Migrant Workers; Migration; *Rural Population; Rural Urban Differences; Whites
IDENTIFIERS *Latinos

ABSTRACT

In rural America, Latinos are the fastest growing population, increasing by 30 percent between 1980 and 1990. Rural Latinos are a large and growing share of the labor hired on farms, but earn only 60 cents for each dollar earned by nonfarm hired workers. This trend is largely due to the restructuring of agriculture in general, and the meatpacking industry in particular, in which production is becoming increasingly decentralized, contracted out to peripheral firms, and operated by fewer nonunionized assembly processes of workers. Meatpacking creates unusually high population mobility and a parallel high turnover in school population. Educational issues include the increased need for bilingual and ESL instructors, who are difficult to attract to rural places; and the fact that rural Latino teenagers have difficulty gaining English skills and social confidence, resulting in truancy, pregnancy, dropping out, and gang development. Communities with proportionately higher concentrations of Latinos tend to have greater poverty, lower median incomes, and lower educational attainment, and places with rapid labor turnover often confront sudden demands for housing, education, health care, and social services. On the other hand, Latinos are giving rural towns a population revival in the face of White flight, expanding the tax base, revitalizing local schools, and infusing cultural diversity. Poorer conditions in rural communities result not so much from the increase in Latino populations as from the exodus of better-educated, better-paid Whites. Policies with regard to Latinos have been reactive rather than proactive, with inconsistent results. This paper also discusses Latino farms and farmers, self-employment and entrepreneurship among rural Latinos, Latino farmworkers, and issues of rural industrialization and restructuring. (Contains 30 pertinent readings.) (TD)

ED 414 102

# JSRI

**Occasional Paper No. 26**
***Latino Studies Series***

## The Features and Roles of Rural Latinos: Cross-National Perspectives

*by Refugio I. Rochín, Ph.D.*
*JSRI Director and Professor*

**Occasional Paper No. 26**
*July 1997*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Refugio I Rochin
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

SAMORA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

**Julian Samora Research Institute**
***Michigan State University • 112 Paolucci Building***
***East Lansing, MI 48824-1110***
**Phone (517) 432-1317 • Fax (517) 432-2221**
**Home Page: www.jsri.msu.edu**

SAMORA RESEARCH INSTITUTE



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RC 021182

# The Features and Roles of Rural Latinos: Cross-National Perspectives

*by Refugio I. Rochín, Ph.D.*
*JSRI Director and Professor*

**Occasional Paper No. 26**
*July 1997*

*Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Agricultural Economics Association (July 1997) and the Rural Sociological Society (August 1997), both in Toronto, Canada.*

**About the Author:** *Refugio I. Rochín*

Dr. Refugio I. Rochín, Director of the **Julian Samora Research Institute**, is Professor of Agricultural Economics and Sociology at Michigan State University and Professor Emeritus of Agricultural Economics and Chicano Studies at the University of California, Davis. His research interests include immigration/migration issues, farmworkers, and rural populations. He received his M.A. in Communication and his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Michigan State University. He has directed **JSRI** since Fall 1994.

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

**Michigan State University**
East Lansing, Michigan

SAMORA JULIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE

**Julian Samora Research Institute**
Refugio I. Rochín, Director
Danny Layne, Layout Editor

**SUGGESTED CITATION**

Rochín, Refugio I. (JSRI Director). "The Features and Roles of Rural Latinos: Cross-National Perspectives." *Occasional Paper #26.* The Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 1997.

The **Julian Samora Research Institute** is committed to the generation, transmission, and application of knowledge to serve the needs of Latino communities in the United States. To this end, it has organized a number of publication initiatives to facilitate the timely dissemination of current research and information relevant to Latinos.

* *Research Reports:* **JSRI**'s flagship publications for scholars who want a quality publication with more detail than usually allowed in mainstream journals. These are edited and reviewed in-house. Research Reports are selected for their significant contribution to the knowledge base of Latinos.

* *Working Papers:* for scholars who want to share their preliminary findings and obtain feedback from others in Latino studies. Some editing provided by **JSRI**.

* *Statistical Briefs/CIFRAS:* for the Institute's dissemination of "facts and figures" on Latino issues and conditions. Also designed to address policy questions and to highlight important topics.

* *Occasional Papers:* for the dissemination of speeches and papers of value to the Latino community which are not necessarily based on a research project. Examples include historical accounts of people or events, "oral histories," motivational talks, poetry, speeches, and related presentations.

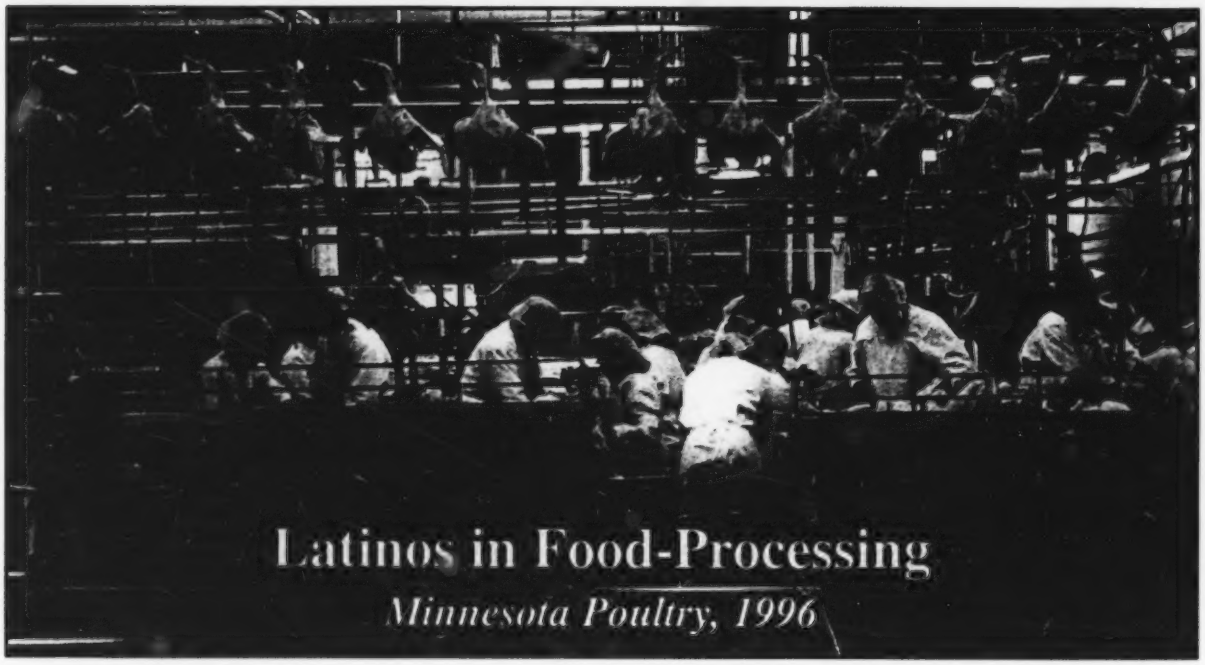
# The Features and Roles of Rural Latinos: Cross-National Perspectives

## *Table of Contents*


**Background** ..... *1*
**Rural Latinos** ..... *2*
**Unique Socio-Economic Status and Conditions** ..... *4*
**Latino Farms and Farmers** ..... *4*
**Self-Employed Rural Latinos** ..... *4*
**Latino Farmworkers and Earnings** ..... *5*
**Issues of Rural Latinos** ..... *5*
**Issues of Rural Industrialization and Restructuring** ..... *6*
**Issues of Latino Concentration** ..... *7*
**Related Issues of Non-Latinos** ..... *8*
**Latinos in the Heartland** ..... *8*
**Issues of Midwest Agro-Industrial Employment** ..... *8*
**Issues of Community Development** ..... *9*
**The Need for New Perspectives** ..... *10*
**A Resource for Rural Latinos** ..... *10*
**Pertinent Readings** ..... *11*
**Appendix A** ..... *14*


The **Julian Samora Research Institute** is the Midwest's premier policy research and outreach center to the Hispanic community. The Institute's mission includes:

- *Generation of a program of research and evaluation to examine the social, economic, educational, and political condition of Latino communities.*
- *Transmission of research findings to academic institutions, government officials, community leaders, and private sector executives through publications, public policy seminars, workshops, and consultations.*
- *Provision of technical expertise and support to Latino communities in an effort to develop policy responses to local problems.*
- *Development of Latino faculty, including support for the development of curriculum and scholarship for Chicano/Latino Studies.*



# Latinos in Food-Processing

*Minnesota Poultry, 1996*

## Background

This paper brings attention to the increasing significance of Latinos in rural America. Its references emphasize the importance of looking beyond the stereotypical Latino as primarily foreign-born, undocumented, migrant, and seasonal farmworkers, who are packed into impoverished "colonias." While there is some validity to these characterizations, these depictions tend to overlook other dimensions of rural Latinos. In particular, some of the recent references point to rural Latinos as historic pioneers of agricultural systems, environmentalists, businessmen, service providers, owner-operators of farms, local leaders, and the fastest growing population of rural communities.

Perhaps the most important features of rural Latinos are related to their growing numbers and widespread settlement throughout rural America. According to the 1990 Census of Population, the nonmetropolitan population of Latinos grew by more than a half million between 1980 and 1990, an increase of 30%, from 1.8 million to 2.3 million Latino residents (see Table 1). Although Whites in general are much more likely to live in non-metro areas than minorities, the presence of Latinos in nonmetro areas is increasing.

In addition, the demographic diffusion of Latinos has brought both positive and negative fame to rural Latinos. Their newness and growth has been featured in the news of many rural towns. In several reports and in the research of academics (see the reference section), there is an apparent desire and need to improve the situations of rural Latinos and communities.

**Table 1: NONMETRO POPULATION BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 1980-1990**

| | *Population* | | | *Share of U.S. group in nonmetro areas* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Race/ethnic group* | *1980* | *1990* | *Change 1980-90* | *Change 1980-90* | *1980* | *1990* |
| | *Thousands* | | | *Percent* | | |
| *White* | 46,753 | 47,863 | 1,110 | 2.4 | 25.4 | 24.7 |
| *Minority* | 7,624 | 8,688 | 1,064 | 14.0 | 16.5 | 14.1 |
| *Black* | 4,770 | 4,923 | 153 | 3.2 | 18.0 | 16.4 |
| *Hispanic/Latino*[1] | 1,786 | 2,329 | 543 | 30.4 | 12.2 | 10.4 |
| *Native American*[2] | 759 | 971 | 212 | 27.9 | 49.5 | 49.6 |
| *Asian* | 309 | 465 | 156 | 50.5 | 8.3 | 6.4 |

[1]Hispanics can be of any race.
[2]Native Americans include American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts.
Source: 1980 and 1990 Censuses of Population.
Reported in USDA *Agriculture Fact Book: 1996: Table 4-1, p. 52.*



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

### *"Rural Latinos"*

A concept of "rural Latino" is much needed today. It should highlight the difference and uniqueness of Latinos who live in rural areas, as compared to "urban Latinos," and should constitute the basis for policies and analysis.

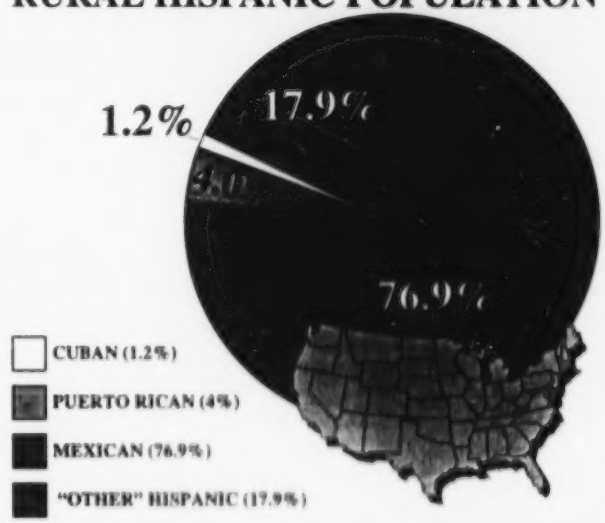
However, we can all agree that anyone who claims to be a "rural American" would be hard-pressed to define "rural" let alone the meaning of "American." Even Webster's Unabridged Dictionary does not narrow the meaning of "rural" to something less than "of or pertaining to the country," or "pertaining to agriculture." The federal government, however, is supposed to have programs and policies for "rural people and communities." So the U.S. Bureau of the Census defines "rural people" as those who live in counties outside the boundaries of metropolitan areas, as defined by the federal Office of Management and Budget. Thus, "rural counties" include small cities (under 50,000 population), small towns, and open country. This is a very unsatisfactory definition of "rural" because a sizeable number of Latinos live in the so-called "urban counties" and they depend almost exclusively on agricultural jobs.

In California, for example, probably as many as a million agricultural/agro-industrial workers (some temporary and some full-time workers) live in metropolitan, "urban," counties. Concomitantly in California, the Census-defined "rural counties" are hardly-populated areas covering the mountainous and desert regions of the state. That is, the Census defined "rural counties" of California are not the agricultural areas. On the contrary, California's "metro counties" have the bulk of the states' farm production. So-called "urban counties" like Kern, Tulare, and Fresno, produce upwards of $8 billion per year of farm products and employ thousands of workers for labor-intensive harvesting and food-processing. Yet, the Census Bureau and Department of Agriculture define these counties as "metro" and do not count the workers, nor their features, in federal reports. Thus, when someone says they are studying 'rural Latinos' with Census data and federal documents, it would be wise to ask if the reports incorporate agricultural workers of "metro counties." All combined, while there were reportedly 2.3 million "non-metro Latinos" in 1990, the federal figure ignores upwards of an additional one million Latinos who live in metro counties and work in rural-related occupations.

The term "Latino" is a label of choice used by the Julian Samora Research Institute. "Latino" and "Latina" refer to male and female Americans who reside in the United States and who were born in or trace their background to the Spanish-speaking nations of Latin America. Often the term "Hispanic" is preferred over the term Latino. Both terms refer to the same group of people, only the term Hispanic is used more frequently by government institutions (e.g., the U.S. Bureau of the Census) and public entities like schools and social services.

It should be noted that the 1990 Census counted respondents of any race as Hispanics if they identified themselves as part of any of the following groups: Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Nuyurican (of New York), Cuban, South and/or Central American, etc., that is, of Latin American origin, including persons from Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean or from Spain. Notice that

**NATIONALITIES WITHIN RURAL HISPANIC POPULATION**




In rural areas "Other" Hispanics are primarily "Hispanos," or descendants of Southwest Spanish settlers; in urban areas "Other" Hispanics are predominantly Central and South American immigrants.
*Source: Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Brazilians of Latin America speak Portuguese and are of Portuguese descent. Since they are not of Spanish origin, they are not counted as Hispanic.

Nationally, Latinos numbered 22.4 million in 1990, a substantial jump from 14.6 million U.S. Latinos in 1980. By the year 2000, federal projections estimate an increase in the nation's Latinos to 28 million (Aponte and Siles, 1997). Currently, about 64% of all Latinos are of Mexican origin, followed by 13% Central/South American, 11% Puerto Rican, 5% Cuban, and 7% other. However, a substantial majority of rural Latinos are of Mexican origin (76.9% in 1990). Rural Latinos also include Puerto Ricans (4.0%), Cubans (1.2%), and "other Hispanics" (17.9%). The last category refers largely to Hispanos (local Latinos) of New Mexico and Colorado in rural areas (Effland and Kassel, 1996).

**Table 2: ILLUSTRATIVE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN MEXICAN-AMERICANS, 1990**

| | Non-Metro "RURAL" | Metro "URBAN" |
|---|---|---|
| **Poverty Rates (%)** | | |
| 1980 | 28.6 | 22.2 |
| 1990 | 34.1 | 24.9 |
| **Education (Age 25-34)** | | |
| *(1990, % with <high school)* | | |
| Male | 50.3 | 50.8 |
| Female | 41.5 | 45.9 |
| **Employed persons age 16-64, 1990** | | |
| *Percent in Agriculture* | | |
| Male | 21.5 | 9.3 |
| Female | 8.7 | 4.0 |
| *Percent in Manufacturing* | | |
| Male | 18.4 | 22.5 |
| Female | 13.1 | 19.2 |
| *Percent in Services* | | |
| Male | 13.5 | 19.6 |
| Female | 42.8 | 43.2 |
| **Median Household Income, 1990 (1989 dollars)** | | |
| 1980 | $20,036 | $24,005 |
| 1990 | $17,328 | $24,700 |
| **Per Capita Income (1989 dollars)** | | |
| 1980 | $5,895 | $7,140 |
| 1990 | $5,840 | $7,431 |
| **Immigrant Status (% in last 10 years)** | | |
| *(Of those employed in Agr., age 16-64)* | | |
| 1980 | 37.9 | 10.6 |
| 1990 | 39.1 | 13.4 |
| **Speak English, "Not well-not at all."** | | |
| *(Of those with less than high school, age 25-64)* | | |
| 1980 | 93.3 | 89.5 |
| 1990 | 90.1 | 84.4 |

*Source:* *Effland and Kassel, Hispanics in Rural America: The Influence of Immigration and Language on Economic Well-Being, USDA/AER No. 731, Aug. 1996.*

Latinos are not an easy group to describe or explain. "Latinos" are a very diverse population. They are heterogeneous in terms of race, nationality, and historical connection to life in the United States. The Spanish word for "mixed blood" is *mestizo*. Latinos are *mestizos* of different races, i.e. White, Black, Asian, and Native American. Latinos are also varied according to when they or their ancestors entered the United States. Some Latinos can trace their heritage to families that settled in the United States nearly 500 years ago. Some Latinos are first generation, i.e., they immigrated to the U.S. Some can trace their family tree to Russia, Germany, and China. Thus, Latinos have a variety of last names which come from different parts of the world. Given the multiple generations of Latinos in America, not all speak Spanish and not all are Catholic or even religious for that matter. This diversity is often lost in the popular images of Latinos and consequently, Latinos are often treated as a monolithic group.

On the other hand, many Latinos have commonalities – most speak Spanish, have Spanish blood, mixed with Native American blood, and most are Catholic. On a whole, regardless of last name, family generation, heritage, etc., Latinos are often unified in terms of these factors.

Latinos arguably share some cultural values, such as those described by Gerardo and Barbara VanOss Marin (Research With Hispanic Populations, Sage Publications, 1991). According to Marin and Marin, Latinos tend to be relatively more "allocentric" (i.e. in-group oriented, not so individualistic); *simpático*, in terms of promoting smooth relationships; *familismo*-oriented, in terms of strong attachment to kindred group; *respetuoso*, in terms of recognizing seniority of elders and leaders: *compadres/comadres* or very close, in terms of interpersonal ties to special friends; and less time-oriented, in terms of strictly adhering to the clock for appointments.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

**Table 3: SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF FARMS OWNED AND OPERATED BY LATINOS, 1992 & 1987**

| | *1992* | *1987* |
|---|---|---|
| *Number of Farms* | 20,956 | 17,476 |
| *Land in Farms (acres)* | 12,349,690 | 8,340,701 |
| *Harvested Cropland (acres)* | 1,836,951 | 1,148,619 |
| *Number of Full Owners* | 12,933 | 11,182 |
| *(acres of owners)* | (3,964,787) | (2,745,808) |
| *Number of Part Owners* | 5,254 | 3,828 |
| *(acres of part owners)* | (6,285,987) | (3,999,069) |
| *Number of Tenants* | 2,769 | 2,466 |
| *(acres of tenants)* | (2,143,916) | (1,595,825) |
| *Total Market Value of* | | |
| *Agricultural Products Sold* | $2.4 billion | -- |
| *From Crops* | $1.4 billion | -- |
| *From Livestock* | $1.0 billion | -- |

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1992. Summary Data. Table 17, p. 23.

### *Unique Socio-Economic Status and Conditions*

There are several demographic and socio-economic conditions which tie rural Latinos together. Their economic status differs greatly from Whites or Anglos (see Appendix A) and, in some respects, from urban Latinos. Take for example the indicators for rural and urban Mexican-Americans, shown in Table 2.

**Table 4: THE FARM ENTREPRENEURIAL POPULATION, 1992-1994**

| (in Thousands) | *Latino* | *Black* | *U.S. Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1994* | 178 | 81 | 5,024 |
| *1993* | 129 | 78 | 4,862 |
| *1992* | 118 | 113 | 4,867 |

Source: USDA, Agricultural Statistics 1995/1996, Table 510, p. ii-10

As indicated, rural "non-metro" Mexican-Americans face much more poverty than their urban counterparts, 34.1% compared to 24.9%. Rural Mexican-Americans, especially those employed in agriculture, have proportionally more foreign-born. Other features are shown in the Table.

### *Latino Farms and Farmers*

The U.S. Bureau of the Census defines a "farm" as any place from which $1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year. Acreage designated as "land in farms" consists primarily of agricultural land used for crops, pasture, or grazing. According to the 1992 Census of Agriculture, Latinos operated 21,000 farms in 1992, an increase from the 17,500 farms in 1987. In addition, Latino land in farms reached 12.0 million acres in 1992 from a base of 8.4 million acres in 1987. Latino farms, in 1992, produced $2.4 billion of agricultural products sold. These data are highlighted in Table 3.

The number of Latino farms with sales of $10,000 and over has increased in recent years, from 6,000 in 1987 to 8,000 in 1992. These numbers are small fractions compared to the million farms (over $10,000 in sales, operated by 1.9 million Whites in 1992). But by comparison, the number of Latino farms and operators outnumber those of African-Americans, Native Americans and Asian-Americans (not shown).

Along with these figures it is important to note that the "farm entrepreneurial population" has grown with increasing numbers of Latinos while the Black numbers have shrunk. The "farm entrepreneurial population" consist of all persons in households where at least one member is employed primarily as a farm operator or manager and at least one member received farm self-employment income in the preceding year. These numbers are indicated in Table 4.

### *Self-Employed Rural Latinos*

Since Latinos, especially Mexican-Americans, represent majorities in several rural communities, the economic development of such places could be tied to their own investments and entrepreneurs. Thus, where Latinos are the majority, we should expect the formation of Latino businesses contributing a valuable economic resource for the community in the form of employment, social capital (local networks of supporters) and tax revenue.

While there is little research to draw from at this stage, what little we know about self-employed rural Latinos is generally depressing. One, in communities where Latinos are the majority, there are relatively few banks and financial support for business entrepreneurs. Two, rural native born Mexican-Americans are not trained or educated (on average) with business degrees which could influence outside finance on their behalf. Three, the businesses owned by local Mexican-Americans tend to be relatively small and appear to be dev loped in communities with relatively high unemployment (see Calo, 1995). In other words, rural Mexican-Americans tend to join the self-employed when they are disadvantaged in terms of investment, education, and alternative jobs. Much work is needed to promote the businesses of Latino entrepreneurs.

### *Latino Farmworkers and Earnings*

In 1994 an average of 779,000 persons (ages 15 and over) were employed per week for wages and salary on farms. But during the summer months as many as 3 million laborers work in agriculture nationwide. These workers include persons hired directly by the farmer as well as those employed by farm labor contractors. The hired farm work force in 1994 was about 51% White, 42% Latino, and 8% Black and other. It is interesting to note that in 1992, just two years earlier, the hired farm work force was about 60% White, 30% Latino, and 10% Black and other. By comparison, the 1994 U.S. wage and salary work force of 104 million persons, was about 76% White, 9% Latino, and 14% Black and other. Hence, Latino workers are contributing a relatively large and growing share of the labor hired on farms. Furthermore, Latino workers account for a large percentage of the hired labor in the regions of the Pacific states (72%), Southern Plains (47%), and Mountain states (37%).

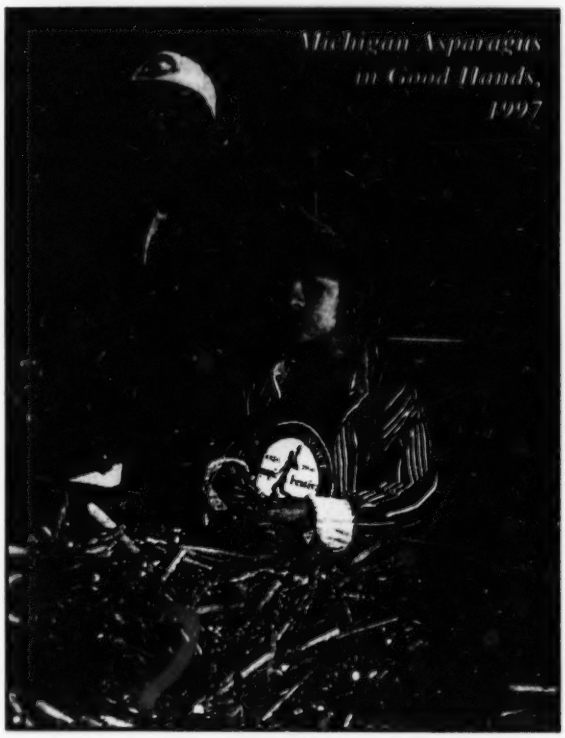
In 1992, farm expenditures for hired and contract labor were reported in all states. About a million farms had expenditures amounting to about $15.3 billion, or about 12% total farm production expenditures. California, Florida, and Texas accounted for 38% of the farm labor expenditures. Farmers in these states rely almost exclusively on Latino workers.

In the U.S., the median weekly earnings of hired farmworkers are much lower than for all wage and salary workers. In 1994, hired farmworkers received median weekly earnings of $238, about 60% of the $400 per week received by all wage and salary workers. The wage gap has appeared to lessen since 1992. In 1992, hired farmworkers received median weekly earnings of 52% of the total workers. Nonetheless, Latino farmworkers, on average, only earn 60 cents for each dollar earned by non-farm hired-workers. Most are "poor" by federal standards.

About 84% of the hired farmworkers in 1992 were male, compared with 52% for all wage and salary workers. These percentages have been consistent for several years. About 57% of the hired farmworkers were under 35 years of age and about 28% of the hired farmworkers were less than 25 years of age. In comparison, 45% of all U.S. wage and salary workers were under 35 and 17% were less than 25 years of age. (See reference by Runyan).

### *Issues of Rural Latinos*

There is growing concern that the economic well-being of rural communities is becoming increasingly changed by Latino residents. The Julian Samora Research Institute finds that communities with proportionately higher concentrations of Latinos tend to have greater poverty, lower median incomes, and smaller proportions of residents with high school or college degrees.



*Michigan Asparagus in Good Hands, 1997*



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What gives rise to these conditions? Some studies have focused on immigration from Mexico and other parts of Latin America as the cause of these correlations. Some studies have connected Latino concentration to patterns of employment, i.e., certain types of farm and agro-industrial production appear to rely on assembly lines of Latino workers. Concomitantly, other questions abound: e.g., is it the increasing Latino population in a community that results in questionable socio-economic outcomes? Is it White flight from communities that results in a reduction of the economic base and a general decline in the viability of towns? Is the Latino population concentrated because of jobs designed for them? Is the Latino population limited in economic opportunity because of the rise of immigrants from abroad, resulting in labor competition? Conversely, are Latinos giving rural towns a population revival, saving the communities from becoming ghost towns? Are Latinos adding culture and global awareness? Are Latinos more productive and filling important jobs? Are Latinos contributing to the revenues and financial viability of businesses?

At this time, there are few answers to these questions. However, California has been witness to the fastest growing concentrations of Latinos in rural places. Looking back in time, in 1950, rural communities in California were largely populated by non-Hispanic White persons. Beginning in 1970, and especially during the 1980's and 1990's, the White/Latino proportions changed dramatically, so that some places became almost completely composed of Latino residents. While Latinos were once numerical minorities within "barrios" of rural California communities, they are now becoming the numerical majorities in many locations (Allensworth and Rochín, 1995, 1996). Will this pattern be spread throughout rural America?

### *Issues of Rural Industrialization and Restructuring*

This decade has been witness to an industrial shift from core sector employment to more secondary sector employment, and formal sector work to more informal sector work. The restructuring of agricultural labor can, therefore, be viewed as part of a general trend observed in industrial restructuring, in which production is becoming increasingly decentralized, contracted out to peripheral firms and operated by fewer non-unionized assembly processes of workers. Not only that, the fresh produce industry has evolved toward more globally networked agribusiness where temporal diversification dominates production decisions. Since fresh produce is highly perishable and labor intensive, workers are more vulnerable to quick changes in where and when a crop will be planted, harvested, and packaged. Workers may be needed by the hundreds for two weeks of work in, say, Salinas, and two other weeks in Imperial Valley, just for the lettuce cycle. There is evidence that rural communities are especially vulnerable to trends in restructuring because of labor mobility and the community's limited economic base, underutilized industrial plant and equipment, and rising numbers of vacant and unattended housing. Since Latino workers are relatively active participants in agriculture, it is important to know how the globally integrated producers use and benefit these workers and their communities.

### *Issues of Latino Concentration*

Latino concentration is increasingly evident in communities along the U.S.-Mexico border which are commonly called "colonias." In Texas, "colonias" arose from conditions that were "unzoned, unprotected squatter communities of campers, tents, and lean-to shelters; just one step away from being completely homeless." More recently, since the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and the enactment of NAFTA in 1992, the Texas "colonia" has evolved, according to the Texas Department of Human Services, into "rural and unincorporated subdivisions characterized by substandard housing, inadequate plumbing and sewage disposal systems, and inadequate access to clean water. They are highly concentrated poverty pockets that are physically and legally isolated from neighboring cities. Most "colonia" residents are of Mexican descent and speak Spanish as their primary language in the home."

by farmworker, agribusiness laborers who settle and buy local homes. What's more, as Latino concentration has increased, attributed to the availability of homes and agricultural work, there is a process of White exodus. That is, there is an absolute decline in the number of White, Anglo residents. This exodus appears to coincide with the influx and settlement of Latino workers.

Latino population growth is seen to fill jobs, fill houses, expand the consumer base, and rebuild a waning population or form a population base to keep cities from disappearing. On the other hand, Latino population growth in rural areas is blamed for deterioration of neighborhoods, declining real earnings through wage competition and for the incentives leading to further restructuring, both in agriculture and manufacturing. According to the subordination thesis, increasing minority population can accentuate competition for particular jobs, so that minority workers are more easily exploited as a source of

In other border states, including New Mexico, Arizona, and California, the same conditions prevail as found in Texas. In California, however, the conditions of "colonias" have spread to the interior of the state, in particular the central valley counties ranging from the north of Sacramento to the south of Tulare, Fresno, and Kern. Here, "colonias" are charactered

cheap labor. Such a perspective is consistent with a neoclassical economic view of labor supply and demand, that a constantly increasing supply of low-wage labor lowers wages for both new and established migrants. As a result, immigration has been blamed for the low earnings and unstable employment of rural Latinos.

Recent studies have shown that Latino concentration can have negative effects on local communities, slightly increasing under-employment, poverty, and public assistance use, although raising mean incomes. In other words, the employment opportunities and earnings of low-skill workers are slightly reduced with increased Latino concentration, although the prospects for economic growth of the community as a whole (especially those who can take advantage of cheap and abundant labor) are increased.

### *Related Issues of Non-Latinos*

In rural America, White people's reactions to increased Mexican immigration have historically brought about two trends, both with negative implications: first, social divisions based on ethnicity, and second, White flight. Several case studies show evidence that established White residents often do not recognize Latinos as part of their community and do not associate Latino needs in community development efforts. Ethnic and class divisions between local White elites and Latinos have resulted in fractured communities, within which the traditional White elite has tried to develop the local economy not through residents' demands for social equity, but through residential and economic segregation.

Furthermore, there is reason to believe that White exodus from many of the rural places where Latinos are settling is due, at least in part, to anti-immigrant, anti-Latino, or anti-farmworker feelings. Rural community news articles point to increased ethnic conflict between Whites and Latinos, as the Latino population increases in size. In some communities, the White population seems to leave as the Latino population moves in, especially in old neighborhoods. What follows are distinct ethnic neighborhoods, with most of the community resources invested in the White side of town, and conflicts erupting with charges of racism and discrimination. Furthermore, the hypothesis that increasing minority representation in a place encourages out-migration of majority group members is not new. "White flight" from urban areas has been consistently blamed on Whites' fear of integration with Blacks, and their fear that property values will decline with greater numbers of minority residents.

### *Latinos in the Heartland*

Although Latinos have been concentrated in the Southwest for centuries, a substantial number have moved into the Midwest since the turn of the century. But in the last decade, according to JSRI reports, Latinos made up the majority of the Midwest population growth in the 1980's, making up for the region's declining non-Hispanic White population.

Multiple case studies have recently documented the dramatic impacts of Latino settlement in Midwest rural communities. These studies concur that communities are experiencing a form of Mexicanization or Latinization as the population gains in Latino residents. The distribution of Latinos is not uniform and spread out across all places. It occurs in communities where packing plants and new forms of agribusiness processing have generated a demand for labor. These studies also point out that rural communities with Latinization have not been prepared for the increasing demands for housing, schooling, diverse cultural interests and public services. Furthermore, local, state, and federal government policies have been enacted in response to these changes, some with questionable objectives. While some studies are alerting us to certain issues, we need to know much more about the full extent to which Latino settlement is occurring and the implications of these trends.

### *Issues of Midwest Agro-Industrial Employment*

While Midwest Latinos work in many different industries, and still work as migrant and seasonal farm workers, a major new magnet that is attracting larger numbers of Latino migrants to rural areas is the restructuring of the meatpacking industry. Large scale

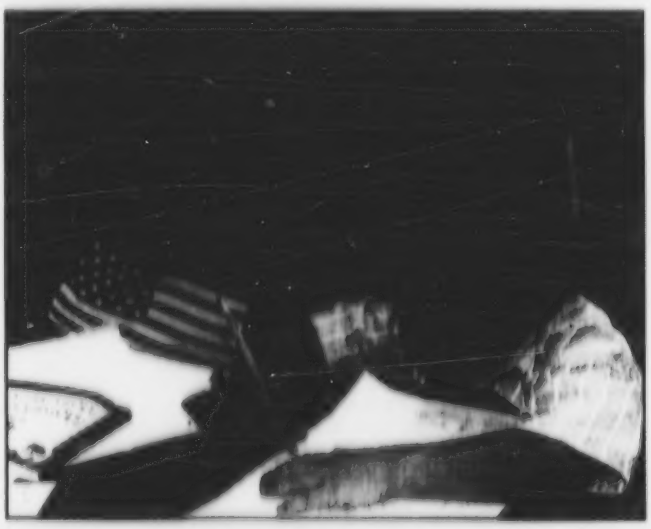
meat processors, such as Monfort, Swift Amour, and IBP, Inc., offer year-round jobs that pay at least $6 an hour — much higher and more stable earnings than are possible as seasonal farm workers. Jobs at these meatpacking plants are attractive to Latinos. Spanish speaking is not a problem and there is relatively little local competition for many of these routine and unpleasant jobs. However, industrial restructuring is characterized by assembly line processes which are labor intensive but demanding in quality and consistency of performance. Rarely do the plants close down as workers and machines operate in a steady cadence of more output, less waste and little downtime in processing. Related to these labor intensive operations are increases in local service sector jobs, as workers settle with their families and tend to bring children in larger numbers into schools, recreational programs or downtowns. Agribusiness restructuring also includes greater integration of farms into the assembly line process as contracts are aligned for the essential raw inputs of cattle, pigs, turkeys, and chickens. There is a noted shift from owner-operated farms to farmers who are assembled by contracts. All of these systems are employing Latino workers.

Labor recruitment, especially of immigrants and Latinos, has been local-initiated in response to labor shortages and increasing competition. By de-skilling operations, and seeking low-wage labor (i.e., immigrants, Latinos, and women), labor costs have been kept relatively low.

### *Issues of Community Development*

Population growth resulting from the installation of new meatpacking plants has brought many positive economic outcomes for rural places, such as a stable market for beef sales, growth in local business, a strengthening of community organizations, revitalization of local schools, and an expanded tax base. However, it has also brought new problems. Meatpacking creates unusually high population mobility. The work is difficult, unpleasant, and dangerous, and the job hierarchy is relatively flat. Some plants discourage workers from receiving health benefits, which are usually only offered after the first six months of employment. Turnover is, therefore, very high, as workers have a hard time staying at the job for a long period of time due to illness, injury, problems with pressure from management, economic insecurity, and dislike of the job. Plants constantly recruit and hire new workers to fill vacancies, so there is a stream of newcomers to the host communities. Because poultry and meatpacking plants keep searching for labor, and because they attract the most financially needy workers, poverty and correlates of poverty are increased.

Places undergoing this rapid turnover have had to confront sudden demands for housing, education, health care, social services, and crime prevention. In most of these places, available housing has been inadequate, overcrowded, and dangerous. Lack of health insurance for Latino workers and difficulties in affording co-payments among the insured, have led to large inadequate prenatal care, problems with tuberculosis, gaps in child immunization, and deficient dental care. Related increases in school enrollments have brought about the need for bilingual and ESL instruction. However, it is difficult to find and attract qualified bilingual teachers to remote places. Latino teenagers find it especially difficult to gain enough English skills or social confidence to be successful in high school, and so have problems with truancy, pregnancy, dropping out, and gang development, implying worsening conditions for future generations. School turnover is relatively high in meatpacking towns, paralleling that of the plants. Language translation has become an expensive issue for courts, schools, and social service providers.



### *The Need for New Perspectives*

Until recently, rural communities have not been studied in terms of the ethnicity and Latino concentration of residents. Emerging research is showing that, contrary to popular opinion, increasing Latino population is not predictably the cause of the lower socio-economic conditions in communities with higher percentages of Latinos. It is increasingly evident that the loss of the non-Latino population has more to do with the relationship between community ethnicity and declining socio-economic well-being (Allensworth and Rochín, 1996). Loss of non-Latino population usually means loss of better-educated, higher earning residents. Loss in non-Latinos in the communities of rural California, for example, translated into higher concentration rates of Latinos in the same communities. Because Latinos are moving into most communities, their growth is not necessarily a cause of poorer conditions. Instead, the decline takes place where communities experience exodus of the better-paid White workers. Hence, where Latinos settle is not the issue of most immediate concern, it is where non-Latinos leave from and go to that is the bigger concern.

Latino concentration need not bring about ethnic tensions, but there are, nonetheless, negative feelings of established residents. One article in the Daily Globe, a newspaper in Worthington, Minn., found that an overwhelming majority of residents surveyed felt that the influx of Latinos into their community had not been good for the community, and many made shockingly racist comments about the newcomers. Unlike California, where settled Latinos often provide services to newcomers and where immigrants are segregated in particular towns or parts of cities, immigrant meatpacking workers in the Midwest often obtain services from non-Hispanic providers, making them more visible in their communities. Nonetheless, changes in local culture due to Latino settlement can be seen as positive — adding diversity and international flavor to the community, or as enhancing culture dimensions of the community. Moreover, Latino integration can add value to the economic base of their towns.

For the most part, neither the industries that are attracting Latinos to rural America, nor the communities that house the workers, have planned sufficiently for the integration of the new Latino settlers.

In general, throughout the nation, policies with regard to Latinos have been reactive rather than proactive, and they continue to be so. Agri-business plants make little attempt to prepare places for the changes that they can expect, or to encourage development of proactive policies and programs. Some communities have tried to prepare for changes in their communities prior to the installation of a new processing plant. In Garden City, Kansas, for example, a ministerial alliance began a public education program when negative rumors started circulating about refugees who began arriving in the 1980's. Because of such efforts, newcomers were at least tolerated by most established residents, although it is less certain whether they have been integrated into the community. Lexington, Nebraska hired consultants to estimate housing needs for the new population expected from the installation of a new meatpacking plant. However, this need was drastically underestimated, due to the plant's low projections of worker turnover and non-local hirings. In general, proactive policy can help if planned for.

### *A Resource for Rural Latinos*

Here at the Julian Samora Research Institute, we have taken the lead in documenting the nations' Latinization of rural places, especially with regard to communities in California, Texas, Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Nebraska, and Kansas. We are looking for collaboration from other researchers to address the wide range of issues and concerns. We are particularly interested in hearing from community leaders, especially from the Latino population, to give us a sense of the situation of increasing rural Latinization. In order to speed this process along, we invite our readers to share whatever ideas and suggestions they have that relate to rural Latinos. Please call (517) 432-1317 or send a message via the JSRI web server: http://www.jsri.msu.edu.

***Our future is best served by better knowledge, informed understanding, and enhanced communication.***

*Refugio I. Rochín*

### *Pertinent Readings*


Allensworth, Elaine M. and Refugio I. Rochín. 1995. "Rural California Communities: Trends in Latino Population and Community Life." *Statistical Brief, No. 7*, Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich.

Allensworth, Elaine M. and Refugio I. Rochín. 1996. "White Exodus, Latino Repopulation, and Community Well-being: Trends in California's Rural Communities." *JSRI Research Report, No. 13,* Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich.

Aponte, Robert and Marcelo E. Siles. 1997. Winds of Change: Latinos in the Heartland and the Nation. *Statistical Brief, No. 5*, Julian Samora Research Institute. Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich.

Bean, Frank D. Jorge Chapa, Ruth R. Berg, and Kathryn A. Sowards. 1994. "Educational and Sociodemographic Incorporation among Hispanic Immigrants to the United States." pp. 73-98 in Barry Edmonston and Jeffrey S. Passel (eds.) *Immigration and Ethnicity: The Integration of America's Newest Arrivals*, Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.

Castillo, Monica Dianne. 1991. California's Rural Colonias: A Study of Disadvantaged Communities With High Concentrations of Latinos. Master's Thesis, Agricultural Economics, University of California, Davis.

Calo, Bea Violanda. 1995. *Chicano Entrepreneurship in Rural California: An Empirical Analysis.* Doctoral dissertation in Agricultural Economics, University of California, Davis.

Davidson, Osha Gray. 1990. *Broken Heartland: The Rise of America's Rural Ghetto*, New York: Free Press.

Effland, Anne B. and Kathleen Kassel, "Hispanics in Rural America: The Influence of Immigration and Language on Economic Well-Being." *USDA/AER No. 731*, August, 1996.

Ferris, Susan and Ricardo Sandoval. 1997. *The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworker Movement*, Orlando, Fla.: Paradigm; San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co.

Flora, Jan, Gary Green, Edward A. Gale, Frederick E. Schmidt, and Cornelia Butler Flora. 1992. "Self-Development: A Viable Rural Development Option?" *Policy Studies Journal*, 20(2): 276-288.

Galarza, Ernesto. 1977. *Farm Workers and Agri-business in California, 1947-1960*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Garcia, Victor. 1997. Mexican Enclaves in the U.S. Northeast: Immigrant and Migrant Mushroom Workers in Southern Chester County, Pennsylvania. *Research Report No. 27*, Julian Samora Research Institute. Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich.

Goldschmidt, Walter. 1978. *As You Sow: Three Studies in the Social Consequences of Agribusiness*, Montclair: Allanheld, Osmun, and Co.

Gouveia, Lourdes and Donald D. Stull. 1996. "Latino Immigrants, Meatpacking Work, and Rural Communities: A Nebraska Case Study." *JSRI Research Report, No. 26*, Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich.

"Hispanics-Latinos: Diverse People in a Multicultural Society." 1995. National Association of Hispanic Publications. Population Characteristics Current Population Reports. Contact the National Association of Hispanic Publications at (202) 776-0556 for more info.

Hodgkinson, Harold L. and Janice Hamilton Outtz. *Hispanic Americans, A Look Back, A Look Ahead (Hispanic Americanos: Una Mirada Hacia Atrás, Una Mirada Hacia Adelante)*. Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc./Center for Demographic Policy. Contact the Publications Dept. for further information at iel@iel.org or (202) 822-8405.

Krissman, Fred. 1995. "Cycles of Poverty in Rural Californian Towns: Comparing McFarland and Farmersville in the Southern San Joaquin Valley." Paper presented the conference "Immigration and the Changing Face of Rural California," Asilomar, June 12-14.

Luloff, A.E. 1990. "Small Town Demographics: Current Patterns of Community Change." pp. 7-18 in A.E. Luloff and L.E. Swanson (eds.) *American Rural Communities*, Westview: Boulder.

Marin, Gerardo and Barbara Van Oss Marin. 1991. *Research with Hispanic Populations*. Newbury Park, Sage Publications.

Martin, Philip L., J. Edward Taylor and Michael Fix. 1996. Immigration and the Changing Faces of Rural America: Focus on the Midwestern States, *Occasional Paper #21*, The Julian Samora Research Institute, MSU, East Lansing, Mich.

Martin, Philip. 1995. *Integrating Immigrants in Rural California and Rural America*. Paper presented at the conference "Immigration and the Changing Face of Rural California," Paper presented at Asilomar, Calif., June 12-14.

Palerm, Juan Vicente. 1991. Farm Labor Needs and Farm Workers in California 1970 to 1989. *California Agricultural Studies Report #91-2*: University of California, Santa Barbara.

Rochin, Refugio I, and Elias S. Lopez. 1995. "Immigration and Community Transformation in Rural California." Paper presented at the conference "Immigration and the Changing Face of Rural California," Asilomar, June 12-14.

Rochin, Refugio I. 1995. "Rural Latinos: Evolving Conditions and Issues." pp. 268-302. in *The Changing American Countryside: Rural People and Places*. Emery N. Castle (ed.) Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Rochin, Refugio I. (Ed.) 1996. *Immigration and Ethnic Communities: A Focus on Latinos*. The Julian Samora Research Institute, MSU, East Lansing, Mich.

Runsten, David, Ed Kissam, and JoAnn Intili. 1995. "Parlier: The Farmworker Service Economy." Paper presented at Asilomar, Calif., June 12-14. SCR 43 Task Force. 1989. The Challenge: Latinos in a Changing California, Report of the University of California SCR 43 Task Force, University of California, Riverside.

Runyan, Jack L. "Profile of Hired Farmworkers, 1994 Annual Averages," U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Rural Economy Division, Washington D.C., *Agricultural Economic 748*, Feb. 1997.

Swanson, Linda L. (ed.) "Racial/Ethnic Minorities in Rural America: Progress and Stagnation, 1980-90." U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural *Economic Report No. 731*, Washington, D.C., August 1996.

Taylor, J. Edward. 1995. "Immigration and the Changing Economies of Rural California." Paper presented at Asilomar, Calif., June 12-14.

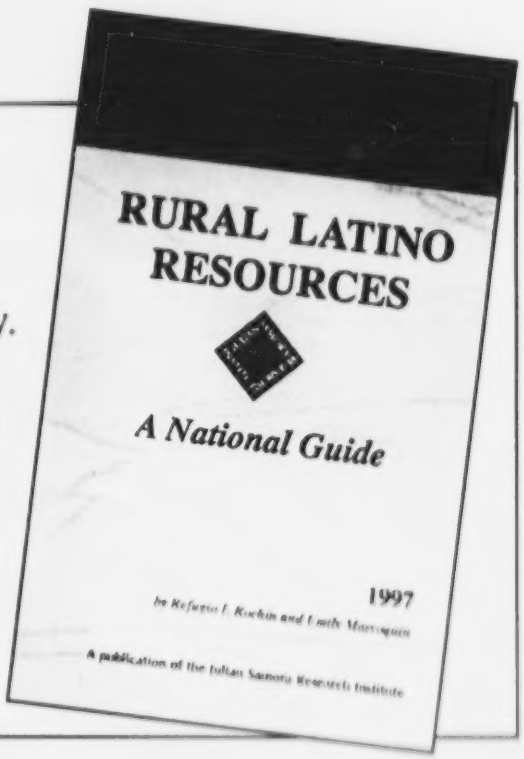
Tienda, Marta and Ding-Tzann Lii. 1987. "Minority Concentration and Earnings Inequality: Blacks, Hispanics and Asians Compared." *American Journal of Sociology* 93 (1): 141-65.


# NOW IN PRINT

from the **Julian Samora Research Institute** at Michigan State University.

This much-requested book provides a listing of educational and business resources on rural latinos.

It is also accessible on **JSRI**'s home page at *www.jsri.msu.edu.*





BEST COPY AVAILABLE

## Appendix A

*From L.L. Swanson, Aug., 1996, U.S. Agricultural Economic Report No. 731*

## POVERTY RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 1980-90

| | 1980 | 1990 |
|---|---|---|
| **Rural*** | | |
| Hispanic | 27.2 | 32.1 |
| Mexican-American | 28.6 | 34.1 |
| Non-Hispanic White | 12.5 | 13.2 |
| Black | 38.6 | 40.1 |
| Native American | 33.9 | 37.7 |
| **Urban** | | |
| Hispanic | 22.8 | 24.1 |
| Mexican-American | 22.2 | 24.9 |

*Rural is defined as those areas outside metropolitan boundaries and is equivalent to nonmetropolitan; urban is equivalent to metropolitan.
*Source: Compiled by Economic Research Service from Public Use Microdata Samples, 1980 and 1990 Census.*

## RURAL MEXICAN-AMERICAN IMMIGRATION, 1980-90

| | 1980 | 1990 |
|---|---|---|
| | *percent* | |
| **Immigrant** | 8.6 | 11.3 |
| Speak English *(age 5+)* | | |
| *At Home* | 22.1 | 23.4 |
| *Well, very well* | 61.1 | 60.2 |
| *Not well, not at all* | 16.8 | 16.5 |
| Employed in agriculture *(age 16-64)* | 15.7 | 16.1 |

*Rural is defined as those areas outside metropolitan boundaries and is equivalent to nonmetropolitan; urban is equivalent to metropolitan.
*Source: Compiled by Economic Research Service from Public Use Microdata Samples, 1980 and 1990 Census.*

## FAMILY & HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS, 1980-90

| | *RURAL** | | | *URBAN* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1980**** | **HISPANIC** | **WHITE** | **BLACK** | **HISPANIC** |
| Median HH Income | $17,328 | $24,200 | $12,927 | $24,700 |
| Per Capita Income | $5,840 | $9,506 | $5,904 | $7,431 |
| Average HH Size | 3.7 | 2.5 | 3.0 | 4.0 |
| **1990** | **HISPANIC** | **WHITE** | **BLACK** | **HISPANIC** |
| Median HH Income | $20,036 | $24,681 | $13,603 | $24,005 |
| Per Capita Income | $5,895 | $10,683 | $5,414 | $7,140 |
| Average HH Size | 3.9 | 2.7 | 3.4 | 3.9 |

*Rural is defined as those areas outside metropolitan boundaries and is equivalent to nonmetropolitan; urban is equivalent to metropolitan.
**Income items converted to 1989 dollars using the Personal Consumption Expenditure Index.

*Source: Compiled by Economic Research Service from Public Use Microdata Samples, 1980 and 1990 Census.*

## LABOR FORCE & UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR PERSONS AGE 18-65, 1980-90

| | *RURAL** | | | *URBAN* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1980 (MEN)** | **HISPANIC** | **WHITE** | **BLACK** | **HISPANIC** |
| **Labor Force Participation** | 86.7 | 86.9 | 77.2 | 89.1 |
| **Unemployment** | 7.9 | 6.4 | 10.1 | 8.3 |
| **1980 (WOMEN)** | **HISPANIC** | **WHITE** | **BLACK** | **HISPANIC** |
| **Labor Force Participation** | 48.1 | 56.1 | 59.0 | 55.5 |
| **Unemployment** | 11.7 | 6.5 | 12.0 | 9.5 |
| **1990 (MEN)** | **HISPANIC** | **WHITE** | **BLACK** | **HISPANIC** |
| **Labor Force Participation** | 86.8 | 85.8 | 77.6 | 88.8 |
| **Unemployment** | 10.9 | 5.8 | 12.9 | 9.1 |
| **1990 (WOMEN)** | **HISPANIC** | **WHITE** | **BLACK** | **HISPANIC** |
| **Labor Force Participation** | 55.9 | 66.5 | 65.6 | 61.8 |
| **Unemployment** | 13.9 | 5.8 | 13.6 | 11.1 |

*Rural is defined as those areas outside metropolitan boundaries and is equivalent to nonmetropolitan; urban is equivalent to metropolitan.

*Source: Compiled by Economic Research Service from Public Use Microdata Samples, 1980 and 1990 Census.*


BEST COPY AVAILABLE